115 me the benefit of his experience in translating these tales. I
*173 hereby thank him most sincerely.

As far as Ségou is concerned, Karé Tammoura's story does not seriously modify the known general outline, but all the same it differs from earlier publications in its essentially native feeling, which I have tried to preserve. It is very interesting, for instance, to see how step-by-step [26] an empire developed out of a fla-n-ton': this change in a strictly native form of association is most instructive. It shows in detail how one of these Sudanese empires -- and not the least of them -- was organized. It is essential to know this if one is to understand the political history of this country. Community, brotherhood, clan, slavery, Islam -- all essential and too-little-known factors of Sudanese society -- are there to be seen, alive and just as they are.

In spite of its weaknesses and its lacunae, I am therefore giving, without change, the story told by the dyeli Karé Tammoura. This Ségou Bambara has occasionally allowed himself to cover the truth with a Moslem veil, because he is a convert; but it is easy to discern the facts under the poorly applied make-up.

115 My informant for Kaarta was principally the dyeli Gran Koaté, who was also a native of Ségou and a Moslem. He was for a long time attached to the person of Ahmadou, son of Omar, with whom he resided at Ségou and at Nioro, where he acted as a close confidant and was sometimes charged with important missions.

● 124 I feel obliged to point out that these two informants are not entirely responsible for the lacunae in their stories. I had had these two learned men brought from Ségou to Djenné, where I was commandant of the circle in 1902. In spite of my desire to learn as much as possible from them, I had to consider the demands of my post, which left me little leisure, and also had to avoid keeping them too long away from their homes. Hence, I was forced to cut short their long speeches. I do not think that I missed anything essential, but undoubtedly there was much to be gleaned from what had to be sacrificed for lack of time. I hope that one of my more fortunate successors may be able to fill in the lacunae in the stories set down here.